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THE TWO CHRISTMAS BOXES

A Play for Girls.

By ELSIE DUNCAN YALE

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CHARACTERS

MRS. JENKINS ..... President of the Ladies' Aid
MRS. HODGES ..... Member of the Ladies' Aid
MRS. BANKS ..... Member of the Ladies' Aid
MRS. WINTER ..... Member of the Ladies' Aid
MISS LOOMIS ..... Member of the Ladies' Aid
MRS. DAVID BROWN ..... Missionary in Montana
DOROTHY BROWN ..... Daughter of Mrs. Brown
MILDRED BANKS ..... Daughter of Mrs. Banks
MRS. WORTHINGTON ..... Sister-in-law of Mrs. Banks
GLADYS ..... Daughter of Mrs. Worthington
MARIE ..... A Maid

The members of the Aid Society wear plain, rather old-fashioned street dresses, with the exception of Miss Loomis, whose dress should be so old-fashioned as to be amusing. In the first scene Mrs. Banks wears a plain house dress with white apron. Mrs. David Brown should be dressed neatly but plainly, and Dorothy wears shirt-waist and skirt. Mrs. Worthington should appear in an elaborate negligee, and Gladys in a pretty house dress, while Marie wears black dress, white apron and cap. Mildred wears sweater, cap and dark skirt. Beneath the sweater is worn a middy blouse.

The first and last scenes take place in Mrs. Banks' sitting room. A few chairs, a bookcase, pictures and table will be required, also two wooden boxes, exactly alike.

In the second scene a poorly furnished kitchen or living room is represented. Plain wood chairs should be used, while a red cover should be upon the table. Mrs. Brown should have a large mending basket beside her. The Christmas box should be in the foreground.

The third scene should represent the living room of an apartment, and should be as handsomely furnished as possible. The Christmas box should be at the side of the room, but before unpacking, should be drawn into the foreground.

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The Two Christmas Boxes.

SCENE I.

(*Mrs. Banks enters carrying large pile of clothing, which she deposits upon a chair.*)

Mrs. Banks. Dear me, that was heavy! Now for the newspapers.

(*Exit and returns with newspapers which she places on a table near the pile of clothing.*)

Mrs. B. Now I have twine all ready and scissors, and everything but the folks to do the work. It's the same way in every church. A few are willing to do all the work and the rest are all willing to have them. There comes Martha Jenkins now!

(*Hurriedly straightens sofa cushion, changes position of chairs, smoothes hair.*)

(*Enter Mrs. Jenkins.*)

Mrs. B. (*effusively*). Well, Martha, I am glad to see you! I began to think that not a soul was coming to help me pack the missionary box. Take off your things!

Mrs. Jenkins. Thank you. (*Removes hat, gloves and coat.*)

Mrs. B. What a pretty waist! Did you buy it ready made?

Mrs. J. New! No indeed! I made that out of last year's and the one before that pieced together. John has read an article about how you can make nice dresses out of stuff you have in the rag bag, so he says I'm just as smart as the woman that wrote that article, and he wanted me to try it. (*sits*).

Mrs. Banks. Well, William did say something about that to me, so I suppose he read the same article, so I

said all right, but I'd have to economize on him too. I'd cut off the tops of his socks for wristlets for cold weather, and I'd make neckties out of Mildred's hairbows for him, and I'd try to make over his old frock coat into a sack coat to wear to the store on week days, so that silenced him all right!

Mrs. Jenkins. There's really no reason for economy being an exclusively feminine virtue.

Mrs. B. (*Taking up several of the articles from the pile of clothing*). These things look as if somebody had been economizing all right.

Mrs. J. (*placing newspaper carefully in the bottom of the box*). Suppose we get busy now and pack the box.

Mrs. B. (*doubtfully*). I don't believe any of the others are coming.

Mrs. J. Emmeline Miller told me she couldn't come on account of domestic affliction.

Mrs. B. (*surprised*). How terrible! What was it?

Mrs. J. Her husband's mother and two aunts have come to spend a week, and Emmeline said if that wasn't domestic affliction she didn't know what was!

Mrs. B. Well we can soon get the box packed. Here's a nice overcoat! (*Holds it up.*)

Mrs. J. Marcia Hill sent that. The sleeves are a bit raggedy and the lining is torn quite badly but the missionary's wife can fix it. They say that's one of the qualifications of a missionary's wife to be able to do anything.

Mrs. B. I'll fold it and wrap it and you can put it in the box. (*folds coat, wraps in paper. Hands to Mrs. Jenkins who places it in the box*).

Mrs. B. I'm going to give this white shawl. (*Holds up shawl.*) It really ought to be cleaned or washed but I simply haven't the time. You know how busy everyone is just before Christmas.

Mrs. J. O that can easily be cleaned in cornmeal or flour or gasoline, I forget which. (*aside*). I should think she'd be ashamed to send it!

Mrs. B. (*wrapping shawl*). I know that the missionaries lead much simpler lives than we do so of course they have more time.

Mrs. J. Hand it to me and I'll but it beside the overcoat.

Mrs. B. Mrs. Hodges sent this dress of Clara's. (*Holds up dress.*)

Mrs. J. It's rather fadey looking but there's a lot of wear in it yet.

Mrs. B. There's a guimpe that goes with it, but when I asked Clara for it, she said her mother said the guimpe was too good to give away.

Mrs. J. (*examining dress*). It isn't a bad quality gingham and it could easily be boiled out and used for a white dress. Wrap it up and hand it over. (*aside*). If she is going to hold a farewell service over every last thing that goes in the box, we'll never get it packed.

Mrs. B. Here's Emmeline Miller's red dress! (*holding up shabby dress.*)

Mrs. J. (*surprised*). O that dress! I don't see how she ever brought herself to part with it for she has worn it years and years!

Mrs. B. The material isn't so bad and it can be scoured, and scrubbed and pressed and mended and it will look quite respectable. (*Wraps dress and hands to Mrs. J.*) I'm going to give this suit of Albert's. Albert simply insists that he will not wear it another day, and so I thought it would do very well for the missionary's son. (*Holds up patched and worn suit.*)

Mrs. J. Well, I'm sure the missionary's son will be very thankful to get it. (*Places suit in box.*)

Mrs. B. I'm going to give these ties too. (*holds up gaudy ties*). Two or three of them are new but Albert is so fussy he won't wear them. I'm afraid I've brought him up to be too particular.

Mrs. J. I'm afraid you have, Louisa.

Mrs. B. (*indignantly*). I don't know as he is any

more fussy than anybody else's boy. I like to see a boy particular about what he wears. (*Folds ties and wraps them.*)

Mrs. J. (*apologetically*). Well, don't get mad, Louisa. I was just agreeing with you. (*aside*). Isn't she a tinder-box when anybody mentions her boy!

Mrs. B. Here's a cape from Mrs. Winter. It's warm, but you can't say much else about it.

Mrs. J. Why it will be just the thing for those cold Montana winters. I think the missionary's wife will be glad to get it.

Mrs. B. (*examining cape*). You see its some moth-eaten and I was scared for fear it would get moths in my house. I never have them.

Mrs. J. Well wrap it up quick, and I'll tuck it in here beside the other things. Why we are getting quite a box full. (*Places package in box.*)

Mrs. B. I thought I would contribute this red wrapper. It's warm, even though it isn't so good looking. (*Holds up shabby wrapper.*)

Mrs. J. I'm sure that will be very useful. But what's that?

Mrs. B. Miss Loomis has actually contributed her hat. Isn't it awful?

Mrs. J. (*hesitating*). Really Louisa, we can't send that! It's terrible?

Mrs. B. Miss Loomis would never forgive me if I didn't. I'd like to put it in the ash barrel though. (*Holds up hat.*)

Mrs. J. Let's see it! (*examines hat*). Well, I suppose if it were steamed and pressed and dyed and other trimming put on, it wouldn't be so bad. We'll have to put it in for a finishing touch.

Mrs. B. (*handing hat to her*). I am certainly thankful that I will not see that hat in front of me in church any more. Here's some more newspapers, Martha, to stuff in at the top.

Mrs. J. (*completes task by packing top of box firmly with papers.*)

Mrs. J. Now thank goodness, that's done. Dear me, it's five o'clock and I must hurry home. I had no idea it was so late.

Mrs. B. (*hospitably*). Can't you stay and have supper with us?

Mrs. J. (*rising and pinning on her hat*). O no, thank you just the same.

Mrs. B. (*helping her on with coat*). Well thank you very much for coming. I'm glad that *one* member of the society was conscientious enough to help.

Mrs. J. (*drawing on gloves*). O I never shirk my duty. Good-bye Louisa. Come and see me real soon.

Mrs. B. You come and see me. Thank you ever so much for helping me.

Mrs. J. Good-bye.

Mrs. B. Good-bye, Martha.

Mrs. B. (*picking up papers and rearranging room*). I suppose Martha thought it would have been absolutely impossible for me to have packed that box by myself. Well, thank goodness it's done, and Amelia's box is done, and I'm about done, too. (*Seats herself wearily.*)

(*Enter Mildred, swinging skates in one hand.*)

Mildred. Well, mother, you look about fagged out. (*goes over to her mother, and smoothes her forehead*). Is the rummage sale over?

Mrs. B. Rummage sale? We were packing the missionary box.

Mildred. (*smiling*). I hope the gifts will be appreciated. I wish I were to get Miss Loomis' hat, and Mrs. Hodges' dress, and a few other adornments.

Mrs. B. (*irritably*). Mildred, I am really too tired to stand any nonsense. I have your Aunt Amelia's box all ready, and I've worried over that, for I know whatever I send will be criticised.

Mildred. (*continuing to smooth her mother's hair*). Well, I don't see how they could possibly find fault with those presents. Dad is always so liberal about that box, but I know Aunt Amelia always finds faults with every last thing we send. I should think though she would be pleased with the waist I embroidered for her, and those lovely handkerchiefs.

Mrs. B. She won't though.

Mildred. It was the limit though for Dad to go shopping on his own account and buy Gladys a dress pattern that I'd have given my eyes for, and fur gloves for Uncle and a fur cap for Joe, and an embroidered dress pattern for Aunt Amelia too. The saleswoman coaxed him into getting those embroidered dress patterns, all right.

Mrs. B. (*irritably*). O your father always has some foolishness about Amelia loving him because he is her youngest brother. But the box is packed anyway, and the expressman is to call in the morning the first thing. I've just got to nail the cover on both boxes and mark them.

Mildred. (*eagerly*). O let me do that mother. I've been gallivanting with the girls out skating while you've been working, and I feel ashamed of myself. Let me do that little bit. (*coaxingly*).

Mrs. B. (*gratefully*). Thank you, dear. I am tired and my head aches, so I'll go rest awhile if you will finish up. Thank you ever so much. (*rises*). Be careful you don't spill ink.

Mildred. (*reassuringly*). O I'll be careful all right. You go rest.

(*Exit Mrs. Banks.*)

Mildred. (*cheerfully*). Now for the amateur carpentry! Who says a girl can't drive a nail? (*Hums a tune as she nails the lid upon first box.*) There, Mrs. Missionary! Your valuable donations are safe. Let us hope that they may not be injured in transit! Now Aunt Amelia, here's something to complain about! (*takes up cards*). O poor mother! She's forgotten to put the

cards on the presents. Well, I can't unpack the box again, and I'm not going to worry her by telling her that she forgot them. Uncle William will know that the sash and embroidered dresses aren't for him. (*nails box*). Now for the marking. Let's see how artistic I can be! Mrs. William Worthington, Morningside Apartments, 524 W. 118th Street, New York. (*suddenly*). O I wonder if that was the right box? (*hesitates*). O I'm sure it was, I couldn't make a mistake about anything like that! Now for the other! (*repeats as she marks*). Mrs. David Brown, Silver Creek, Montana. Now ladies, for what you are about to receive may you both be truly thankful!

CURTAIN.

SCENE II.

(*Dorothy dusts room, while Mrs. Brown is seated at table mending.*)

Dorothy. (*mournfully*). Well, mother, it don't look much like Christmas with father and Rob away. I suppose you are going to celebrate by mending, so I'll get out that old blue waist and see if I can patch it up to look more respectable. (*Searches in mending basket and brings out waist. Holds it up to view.*) It's pretty hopeless though! (*satirically*). What a merry lively Christmas it will be!

Mrs. B. (*cheerfully*). Things might be lots and lots worse, daughter. Since your father had to be away, I'm glad that Rob could keep him company, and we'll have a postponed Christmas when they come back. Thread this needle for me, please. Your eyes are better than mine. (*Dorothy threads needle.*)

Dorothy. (*handing needle to her mother*). A postponed Christmas is as cheerful as a warmed over pancake! But let's open the box instead of waiting for father. He won't care.

Mrs. B. (*hesitatingly*). I had planned to wait till he

came back but there may be something perishable in the box.

Dorothy. Perishable! Everything perished long before it reached us! Wait till I get the hammer and chisel to open it.

(*Exit Dorothy.*)

Mrs. B. (*sadly*). Poor Dorothy! How I would love to have pretty, dainty clothes for her and how she would enjoy them.

(*Enter Dorothy with child's shabby hat on head.*)

Dorothy. (*smiling*). This is the hat that was sent last year, so do you wonder I am pessimistic about this year's box? (*Tosses hat into corner*). Well, now for the opening, and I'll be hopeful anyway.

Mrs. B. Look out for your fingers!

Dorothy. (*cheerfully*). O I'm a fine amateur carpenter! This lid was nailed on to stay, though! (*Removes lid from box.*)

Dorothy. (*surprised*). Well, I never! Mother, mother, put down that old mending and look here! (*Takes mending from her mother.*) Did you ever see such a lovely box!

Mrs. B. (*also surprised*). What a beautiful box? Is it really meant for us?

Dorothy. Here's the label all right. Mrs. David Brown, and that's you! Just see the holly! Isn't it Christmas-y? (*Places sprig of holly in her hair.*)

Mrs. B. (*hesitating*). Hadn't we better wait till your father and Rob come?

Dorothy. (*reproachfully*). Wait? O mother what outrageous cruelty! Why my fingers just itch to open those packages. There don't seem to be any labels, but we can guess at them. You take the first.

Mrs. B. (*takes parcel, unwraps and displays white embroidered waist*). Isn't that exquisite?

Dorothy. (*enthusiastically*). Why, mother, you'll look

as pretty as a picture in it. Stand up and let's see how it looks on you. (*Holds up waist upon her mother.*)

Dorothy. Mother, you just look sweet. And now for my turn. (*Takes parcels, unwraps, and holds up dress with flowered sash.*)

Dorothy. (*excited*). Why mother I never had any thing like this in my life! It's the first thing that I've ever owned that didn't look as if some one had worn it till they were sick of it, first. I wish I could see it in the glass. Who's our fairy godmother?

Mrs. B. Why the Ladies' Aid Society of the Meadowbrooke Church. Don't you remember that they wrote, saying that they were sending a box?

Dorothy. Well, this is surely some box! Now mother, it's your turn!

Mrs. B. (*unwraps sweater*). This must be for Rob! How pleased he will be! I'll wrap it up again.

Dorothy. That may be Rob's but I know I'm going to borrow it sometimes! (*Tries on sweater.*)

Mrs. B. Now it's your turn to take a package.

Dorothy. It's just like Aladdin's lamp. (*takes package*). Now I wonder what this is? (*Opens box*). O mother what lovely neckwear? It's almost too dainty to touch. That pale blue will look so pretty with your waist. Did I ever see such a box!

Mrs. B. (*taking parcel*). I guess I am as excited as you are about it, Dorothy. (*Opens package*). This scarf must be for your father, and see, here are gloves to go with it.

Dorothy. Then I am going to throw away those gloves which you have mended and mended till they are nothing but mends. (*Takes gloves from mending basket and throws them in waste basket.*)

Mrs. B. (*reprovingly*). It doesn't take you long to learn to be extravagant!

Dorothy. (*taking large package from box*). I wonder what's in this big one. The best way to find out is

to open it. (*Opens package and holds up eiderdown robe.*) O mother, won't this be nice for you, so warm and comfy! You must try it on right away! (*Slips robe over mother's shoulders.*)

Mrs. B. I'll enjoy this I know! Now for my turn. (*Opens box of handkerchiefs.*) How dainty and pretty! We'll divide these, but you mustn't lose one!

Dorothy. My turn for the fairy gift box. (*Opens parcel.*) A fur cap for Father! *Won't* he be pleased! (*Tries cap on.*) This looks nicely on me, but I mustn't be selfish!

Mrs. B. I should hope not, with all the lovely gifts, that you have! (*Takes prettily decorated package.*) Candy! Well, this is for everybody! I'll just keep it till father and Rob come back.

Dorothy. (*reaching for it*). Perishable goods!

Mrs. B. (*firmly*). I know it will be perishable if I put it where you can get it!

Dorothy. (*resigned*). Well, I'll be patient and wait. Now I'll put back father's and Rob's presents, and then I'll take some of this holly and decorate with it. Dear me! We won't recognize ourselves!

Mrs. B. (*earnestly*). I am going to write at once to the Meadowbrooke ladies, and tell them what a beautiful Christmas they have made for us.

Dorothy. I take back all I said about a blue Christmas, and while you write *I'm* going to try on my new clothes.

CURTAIN.

SCENE III.

(*Gladys stands on a chair endeavoring to festoon a rope of evergreen over the doorway or window frame.*)

Gladys. Well, somebody has to get up enough energy for a little bit of Christmas decorating, with father and

Joe both away. Maybe I'll get a tumble, but it will be in a good cause.

(*Enter Marie, with tray.*)

Gladys. O Marie put your tray down and help me fix up this place so it will look more like Christmas and less like an apartment.

Marie. (*politely*). Yes, Miss Gladys. (*aside*). It is a pleasure to see some cheerfulness. The madame! (*imitating*). Marie, the coffee is weak, the rolls are cold, the grapefruit is impossible! (*sets down tray*).

Gladys. You hang a wreath in the window, and I'll fix this rope of green over the door. (*Marie and Gladys arrange greens.*)

Gladys. Now that is something like.

Marie. Miss Gladys, I will remove the tray, for madam would disapprove of it remaining here.

Gladys. (*stepping down from chair*). Yes, and I might put my foot in her blue and gold coffee cup, and she would disapprove still more.

(*Exit Marie with tray.*)

(*Enter Mrs. Worthington.*)

Mrs. W. (*languidly*). Good morning, Gladys.

Gladys. (*cheerfully*). Good morning, mother. Just in time to open Aunt Louisa's Christmas box.

Mrs. W. (*seats herself and takes up bottle of smelling salts*).

Mrs. W. (*listlessly*). I really am not interested especially in your Aunt Louisa's box. It is past my comprehension why when she is a woman of such plain, not to say plebeian taste, she and your uncle should enjoy a comfortable income, when we are obliged to strive so hard to keep up the appearance which our social position demands.

Gladys. (*calling*). Marie! Bring a screwdriver or a nail file or something and we'll open the box. Well, mother, maybe Aunt Louisa economizes more than we do,

but my definition is that economy is spending your money in such a manner that you don't get any pleasure out of it.

(*Enter Marie.*)

Gladys. Thank you, Marie. Now let's open the box. (*Both try to pry up lid, and finally are successful.*)

Gladys. Now mother, brace up, there's a nice lady, and take some interest in your pretty gifts.

Mrs. W. (*carelessly*). Gladys, I have told you I am too nervous to take an interest in anything today. (*changing tone*). How shocking! Why your aunt has stuffed the box with newspapers! Newspapers for packing Christmas gifts! What execrable ignorance! Marie, take them out quickly!

Marie. (*respectfully*). Yes madam. (aside). Madam is not too nervous to take an interest now.

(*Exit Marie.*)

Gladys. (*smiling*). O that's a novelty mother. Holly seals and red ribbon are monotonous.

Gladys. (*taking out parcel, and unwrapping it*). O how charming, mother! Here is a hat for me to wear on Fifth Avenue! I'll try it on!

Mrs. W. (*paralyzed with indignation*). O what can your aunt Louisa be thinking of! To insult me in this manner! That hat! How atrocious! Marie take it out of my sight!

Marie. (*respectfully*). Yes madam. (*aside, holding up hat to audience*). A charming token from the beloved relatives!

(*Exit Marie.*)

Mrs. W. (*gasping*). Gladys! My smelling salts! It is incomprehensible! What will your father say!

Gladys. (*laughing*). He will say that it is exclusive and that you won't find another in New York like it. (*unwraps parcel, and takes out moth-eaten cape*). This is an evening wrap, which you can wear to the opera to-

morrow evening. (*examining cape*). It looks as if the moth family and their relatives had been having an informal supper on this stylish garment.

Mrs. W. Gladys how can you laugh? I shall not recover from this shock for a year!

(*Enter Marie.*)

Mrs. W. Marie, take that thing and tell the ashman to give it to his poor relations!

Marie. (*respectfully*). Yes madam! (*aside*). Such a charming wrap, I almost fear to touch it! (*carries it gingerly*).

(*Exit Marie.*)

Gladys. Well, mother, brother and I are some tar- My dear brother is not forgotten I am glad to see! These ties will cultivate a love of beauty.

Mrs. W. And my poor boy must be insulted too! Terrible, terrible! (*uses smelling salts*).

(*Enter Marie.*)

Mrs. W. Marie give these ties to your cousin, the policeman that comes to call. He can wear them when he is off duty.

Marie. Thank you for your kindness, Madam. (*aside*). Alphonse wear ties like these? Never!

Gladys. (*satirically*). Aunt Louisa remembers that you are an invalid, and has sent this negligee (*hands shabby eiderdown robe to her mother*).

Mrs. W. (*in agitation*). Gladys, how you can laugh at my poor health, is more than I can comprehend, and why your Aunt Louisa should have chosen to make me the target of her insults is more than I can understand. Marie, give it to the rag man.

Marie. Yes madam. (*aside*). I fear he would not accept it.

(*Enter Marie.*)

Gladys. Well, mother, brother and I are some tag-

gets too. Here's a dress to wear to the Van Schuyler's tea, and here's a very nifty suit for Rob. (*exhibits faded gingham, and patched suit*). The gingham however is a bit decollette, but it has the fashionable short skirt.

Mrs. W. I am mortified beyond expression that Marie should witness this frightful scene. Marie!

Gladys. What makes you subpoena her as a witness then?

(*Enter Marie.*)

Marie. You called Madam?

Mrs. W. (*with dignity*). Marie put these shocking garments where I shall never see or hear of them again.

Marie. Yes, madam.

Gladys. (*rummaging in box*). Wait a minute Marie, and save your steps. Here are a couple more offerings that will need your kind care. (*unwraps shawl*). Dearest mother, a fleecy shawl for your shoulders, to shield you from the chill winds. (*attempts to place shawl about her mother's shoulders*).

Mrs. W. (*screaming*). Gladys! Take it away. How horrible! The thing isn't a shawl, it's a moth-hole!

Gladys. (*continuing*). I feared that my dear father was to be forgotten, but he too is remembered. (*holds up overcoat*). An overcoat, neat but not gaudy, with a pleasing openwork effect in the lining.

Mrs. W. (*sinks back in chair*). I am overcome. Marie, take these abominable things away. I shall never recover from this shock, and I shall never forget this insult. (*dries her eyes*). And I shall write your Aunt Louisa at once and tell her in unmistakable language, my opinion of her, in sending to me, to *me* a box evidently intended for the almshouse!

CURTAIN.

SCENE IV.

(*As curtain rises, members of Ladies' Aid Society are seen removing wraps, the President, Mrs. Jenkins, being in the chair.*)

President. (*rapping upon table*). Will the meeting please come to order?

Miss Loomis. (*wildly*). Where *is* my other rubber? They were brand new last week, and—

President. (*rapping again*). Ladies, will you *please* come to order? We will open with the minutes of the last meeting, and Miss Loomis, who acted as secretary pro-tem, will read them.

Miss Loomis. (*apologetically*). I didn't have time to copy them in the book, but I have them on a piece of paper. (*rummages in bag*). I'm sure I brought them. Here they are! (*reads*). Take one dozen eggs—Oh, mercy no, that's the recipe for angel cake. Wait till I look again. (*takes crochet pattern from bag*). That's the pattern for lace that Brother Tom's wife gave me. (*Holds it up.*) It's real pretty, isn't it?

Mrs. Hodges. (*eagerly*). Let me see it!

Miss Loomis. (*explaining*). You make a double crochet, after you've chained twelve.

Mrs. Hodges. Oh, that's easy! I could pick that out myself.

(*Other members endeavor to examine the crochet pattern.*)

President. (*with dignity*). Miss Loomis, we are waiting for the minutes of the meeting.

Miss Loomis. (*holding up paper*). O here they are! I'll read them!

Miss Loomis. The regular meeting of the Ladies' Aid Society was held on November tenth at the residence of Mrs. Winter, seven members present, and the President, Mrs. Jenkins, being in the chair. Minutes of last meeting read and approved. Report of supper commit-

tee read and approved. Proceeds of harvest supper, seven dollars and thirty-five cents.

Mrs. Winter. We charged too much for that supper, or we'd have made more money.

Mrs. Hodges. (*sharply*). I don't think we charged too much considering the terrible price of food.

Mrs. Winter. (*irritably*). Well, I don't like to work my feet off for a measly seven dollars.

President. (*rapping*). Ladies, will you please come to order. Miss Loomis, continue with your report.

Miss Loomis. (*nervously*). I lost my place. Let's see—

President. (*to help her*). You were reading about the harvest supper.

Miss Loomis. O yes. It was voted to send a box to Mrs. David Brown, committee to meet at the home of Mrs. Banks, chairlady of the committee.

Mrs. Banks. There were only two of the society there.

Miss Loomis. I was too busy to come, but I sent a nice hat for the missionary's wife.

Mrs. Banks. (*aside*). That terrible hat!

President. Ladies, I must insist that you come to order.

Miss Loomis. (*worried*). Where's that crochet pattern? I can't lose that!

Mrs. Hodges. (*handing it to her*). Here you are. I was just counting the stitches.

President. Miss Loomis, if you have finished your report, we will hear a letter received by Mrs. Hodges, our secretary, from Mrs. Brown.

Miss Loomis. Yes, I guess that was all.

..Mrs. Hodges. (*nervously*). Wait till I find my glasses. (*rummaging in bag*). Here they are. (*Opens letter.*)

"My Dear Friends: Words fail me when I try to express my thanks for the beautiful box which you sent.—

Miss Loomis. Pleased, wasn't she?

"My heart is too full to write, as I think of the wonderful kindness which prompted you to send it."

Mrs. Winter. (*puzzled*). They ain't usually so thankful.

President. Ladies, please come to order, and let us listen to the letter.

Mrs. Hodges. (*continuing*). The beautiful dress for my daughter. (*aside*). She meant that gingham of Clara's—Where was I—The clothing for myself which seems far too good for a missionary's wife—"

Miss Loomis. Somehow that don't just fit our box.

Mrs. Hodges. (*continuing*). "The gifts for my son and husband are most thankfully received. Believe me dear friends, I am more than grateful for your kindness.

"Yours very sincerely,

"RUTH M. BROWN."

Mrs. Winter. Somehow I can't quite figure that out.

Mrs. Hodges. Ours was a nice box, nice enough, but she didn't have no call to say quite so much.

Mrs. Banks. (*rising*). Ladies, I have here a letter from my husband's sister, Mrs. Worthington, which may throw some light upon Mrs. Brown's letter. Each Christmas we send a box to Mrs. Worthington, and I have received this acknowledgment for the gifts which we sent this year. (*Opens letter.*)

"Louisa: I have just supervised the opening of a box, which while directed to me was evidently destined for the almshouse. In fact, I doubt whether the inmates of the almshouse would have found the donations acceptable. Beneath newspapers which formed the packing, I found an article, which at first appeared to be a abandoned birds' nest, but which upon closer inspection was evidently intended for a hat."

Miss Loomis. (*aghast*). My hat! Why I paid five

dollars for that hat eight years ago and it was perfectly good. A bird's nest! My hat!

Mrs. Banks. (*calmly*). May I continue?

"There were a motley collection of ghastly neckties, a tattered overcoat, a forlorn gingham—

Mrs. Hodges. (*indignantly*). That was a perfectly good dress, only Clara said she wouldn't wear it any more!

Mrs. Banks. (*continuing*). "And other disreputable apparel. I cannot understand the insult and assure you that I deem it unwarranted and unpardonable. I need hardly say that the garments were given to the rag man.

"Your sister-in-law,

"AMELIA WORTHINGTON."

Mrs. Winter. What an awful letter!

Mrs. Hodges. (*shocked*). I'm glad I haven't relations-in-law like that!

Mrs. Banks. It is evidently clear to you ladies, that the labels upon the boxes were mixed, and the box for my sister-in-law reached Mrs. Brown, while the missionary box which we packed was sent by mistake to Mrs. Worthington.

Miss Loomis. (*indignantly*). To say that my hat was a birds' nest!

Mrs. Winter. And disreputable apparel!

President. Ladies, will you come to order! I regret of course that the mistake has been made, for doubtless it places Mrs. Banks in a very embarrassing position.

Mrs. Banks. (*nervously*). Embarrassing is no word for it. She was so mad, it showed in her handwriting. (*Passes letter round for inspection.*)

Mrs. Hodges. (*gently*). Well, there is one good side to it. The missionary was pleased with her box, and I guess Clara's dress was pretty faded.

Mrs. Winter. (*apologetically*). And I might have taken time to mend the overcoat.

Miss Loomis. (*firmly*). I make no apologies for my hat!

President. I suppose we could have fixed up the box meant for the missionary with pretty wrappings, like we do other peoples.

Mrs. Hodges. (*rising*). Ladies, may I say a few words?

President. Mrs. Hodges has the floor.

Mrs. Hodges. I think this has been a lesson to us, although it has probably made a peck of trouble for Mrs. Banks.

Mrs. Banks. That's so!

Mrs. Hodges. I think it shows us that our missionary likes pretty things the same as we do.

Miss Loomis. (*interrupting*). That's why I sent my hat!

Mrs. Hodges. (*continuing*). And while I am sorry that it has made trouble for Mrs. Banks, I can't help being glad that the missionary got the nice box, so I would move that hereafter we make our missionary Christmas boxes as nice as those we send our husband's relations.

All. Second the motion!

President. It is moved and seconded that hereafter we make the boxes we send to our missionaries as good as those which are intended for our husband's relations. All in favor say "Aye."

All. (*heartily*). Aye!

President. Opposed? It is unanimously carried.

CURTAIN.

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